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MODAL VERSE

(In Two Parts)

BY

GEO. W. NEWTON

Attorney at Law, Retired

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EMMA BELL FOSTER

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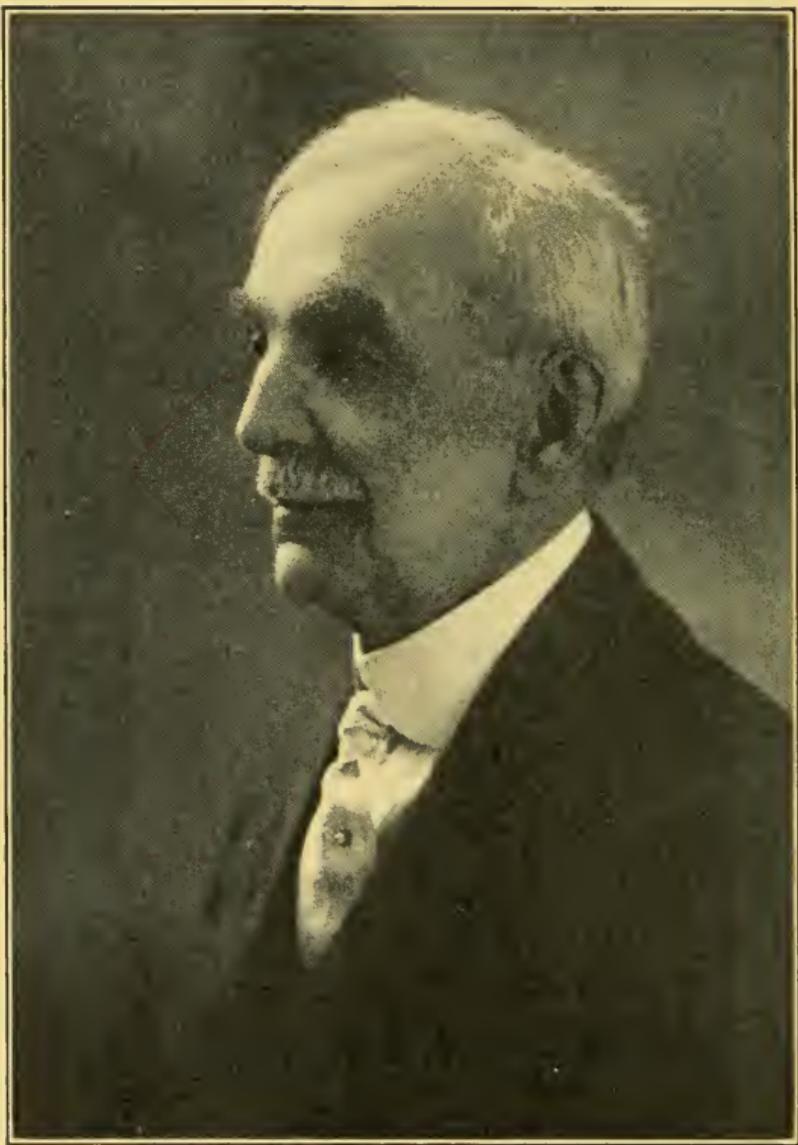
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Sincerely Yours
Gro. W. Newton.

Serial Number.....

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By

GEO. W. NEWTON



TO
ALL LOVERS OF VERSE
AND AMATEURS IN VERSIFICATION
AND LIKE FORMS OF INNOCENT FOLLY
AND SELF-ENTERTAINMENT
AND RECREATION
THIS LITTLE BOOK
IS FRATERNALLY
DEDICATED



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“O World, Thy Slippery Turns”



FOREWORD

It may be of interest to the curious or critical reader of this modest little volume of verse to be assured that its contents were not prepared in expectation of receiving any emolument or reward therefrom, for such is truly the fact. In such case, then, the book must be deemed in its entirety as the work of a mere novice or amateur: and so it is.

The author has always been much interested in the study of rhetoric and kindred subjects, and inasmuch as the duties of the profession to which his life has been devoted required him to give much attention to prose composition of a polemical and analytical character, he naturally, and almost instinctively, turned to versification for relaxation and recreation.

The change afforded a ready and agreeable relief from the almost continuous grind and burden of professional work and was in a way restful and entertaining.

The subjects treated are not numerous, but they are for the most part of such a nature as to lend themselves readily to the style of verse in which they are developed.

The diction, thoughts and versification seem to run in perfect accord and to invest the treat-

ment of the subjects with a degree of poetic harmony and completeness not often found in verse, especially in modern verse.

Yet it is not contended that these efforts are perfect, or perhaps more than average compositions of their kind. However, their preparation has afforded the author many hours of amusement, recreation and contentment—indeed, relaxation from more strenuous labors.

Their publication at this time is attempted with the same end in view, except that it affords employment of a pleasant and entertaining nature for what otherwise would be hours of idleness forced upon the author by the burden of more than four score years of life.

There should be many more subjects; and no doubt would be, but from the fact that perhaps the greater part of the author's efforts in the same direction were destroyed by a fire that consumed his living rooms and many other of his possessions.

This explanation accounts for certain short pieces found herein and designated, "Fragments." They have been brought into the collection from memory, but without the entire article in which they belong.

It is the sincere desire of the author that the reader may find at least a short hour of recreation and entertainment in their perusal, though it is not to be expected that the read-

er's enjoyment therefrom can equal that of the writer's, in their preparation.

Should an apology for this publication be sought, it may be found in what is already disclosed in this prefatory note. However, such disclosures are not so offered, but rather as a substantial and justifying reason therefor.

Before closing this note I desire to extend my grateful thanks to Wallace Campbell, Esq., and to Mr. George E. Kremer, and other friends, for many words of encouragement and suggestions in its preparation and publication and without which it is feared neither would ever have been undertaken.

Whoever may desire further explanation can gather it from a couplet by some author whose name is now to the writer unknown, to-wit:

Something today and something still,
Enough's in life a life to fill.

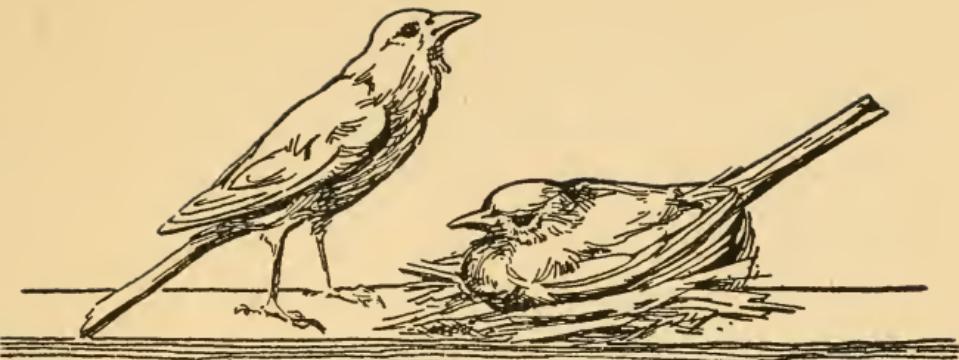
G. W. N.

Bismarck, N. Dak., July, 1921.



Part One





THE ROBIN BIRDS

(*Merula Migratoria*)

ROBIN birds together mated
By some sympathy they know;
Heart to heart in strong ties wedded,
Two as one for aye united,
More devoted still to grow;
Drawing each to each more closely
By the subtle cords of love,
Than the elfin spirits ghostly
In their fairyland above.

Up beneath the shading cornice
Of the porch before the door;
There their rustic home or nest is
And their household gods and manes,
There have been two years or more.
Thence by chill winds driven thither
To the Southland warm and fair,
Their's not love to shrink or wither;
Their's not hope to feel despair.

When discovered it was only
Part constructed, rough and rude,
Yet how cunningly and swiftly
And how certain and exactly
'Twas completed well and good;
Were it rocked by storms of winter
Till a breach came in its side,
First replaced was ev'ry splinter
At their coming to abide.

Thence from time to time returning
From the garden or the hill;
She within the nest walls hiding,
He the meantime close abiding
On the nearest window sill,
Fixed there as if sense of duty,
Indescribable in letters,
Or some all enchanting beauty
Him enthralled in mystic fetters.

Soon a flutter and a whirring
And the shadows flitting pass
Of two objects quick and stirring
And but slight the vision blurring,
Thrown in streamlets on the grass,
And the nest is quite deserted
And the window sill is bare,
Yet their care is not averted
From four eggs close nested there.

'Mongst the leafy boughs outreaching
O'er the ledge across the way,
Many birds in chorus ringing,
Are their richest notes in singing
In one grandest roundelay;
And these robin birds in clearest
Notes distinct above the rest,
Show their joy is full, completest,
For the eggs within the nest.

Days and nights each with the other,
She upon the nest and he
On the window sill together
Much as ever birds of feather
Flock unto the selfsame tree,
Watch with closest care and tender
O'er the eggs with growing zest,
Till the brittle shells do render
Four young robins in the nest.

Now life's work when undertaken
Is no toy to drop as soon
As its cares to life awaken,
And its calls and needs so hasten
That to strive's the only boon;
But to those who find in living
Benefactions for its toil,
Love of offspring, joy of serving,
All discordant thoughts forestall.

Robin birds together caring
For their nestlings young and frail;
Ever striving and contriving;
Urge of duty them inspiring,
To provide in full detail
For all wants—and birds have legion—
That recurring ever stay
In the very place and region
Traveled o'er from day to day.

When their days by weeks are counted
And the nest they over-fill,
Then to each is full recounted
Of the dangers, swift and mounted,
That pursue to slay and kill,
And this brood of nestlings slender
For themselves have life begun,
And these robin birds can render
Full account of duty done.



AN INSTANCE

O'er pressed, o'er come, by ills, disease,
I sought my chamber room,
The catch turned in the clicking lock,
Its bars shut out life's gloom .

Its narrow span was broad enough,
Its darkened windows shone,
All friendship seemed attendant there,
Though I was near alone.

The doctor called, came quickly there,
Cheerfully assuring,
His ministrations brought results,
Speedy convalescing.

The moments sped on wings so swift,
By ways I dare not name,
My cup of bliss was full indeed,
And so I did proclaim.

But somehow thence, there came, alas !
By steps not easy counted,
A troub'ling spirit so intense,
To all my thoughts it mounted.

A troub'ling spirit so intense,
That though 'twas unattended,
All evil spirits in its train
Might well be comprehended.

I sought its name, nor sought it long,
For soon it was revealéd,
That ennui forced my chamber walls
When my disease was healéd,

I seized the catch, the bar turned back,
The lock still clicked its voicing,
Forth went I out into the world
And on life's way rejoicing.

But there are facts I must relate
So soon did I recover,
My faithful wife was my good nurse
And I am still her lover.

WHERE NORTH DAKOTA COMES IN

Up where the Morning's Glow seems
 some little nearer,
Up where the Mid-day Sun shines
 some little clearer,
Up where the Ev'ning's Star shows
 some little better,
Up where the Coming Night waits
 some little later,
There's where North Dakota comes in.

Up where the Falling Rains seem
 some little fresher,
Up where the Spreading Fields reach
 some little further,
Up where the Waving Grass seems
 some little greener,
Up where the Zest of Life seems
 some little keener,
There's where North Dakota comes in.

Up where the Rushing Winds seem
some little stronger,
Up where the Winter's Snow lasts
some little longer,
Up where the Neighbor's Heart seems
some little warmer,
Up where the Hands we Clasp seem
some little fonder,
There's where North Dakota comes in.

Up where the Friends we Meet seem
some little nearer,
Up where all Womankind seems
some little dearer,
Up where Rewards of Life seem
some little surer,
Up where Life's Failing Aims seem
some little fewer,
There's where North Dakota comes in.

Up where the Twinkling Stars seem
of greater numbers,
Up where the Summer Nights bring
refreshing slumbers,
Up where each Maiden Eve seems
some little sweeter,
Up where each Mother's Son seeks
some other's sister,
There's where North Dakota comes in.

Up where the Air we Breathe seems
 some little fresher,
Up where the Mead of Life seems
 some little sweeter,
Up where no Living Soul needs fear
 the tyrant's rod,
Up where all Forms of Life cannote
 the care of God.
There's where North Dakota comes in.

Who hits the trail to this fair state,
 And toils within its pale;
Finds Opportunity in wait,
 To pass him out the Kale.

So now indeed, we end our lay
 And thoughts or sad, remote;
Who settles here to toil and stay,
 Must meet enthusing hope.

CONSOLATION, A FRAGMENT

So rage as Hate will, violence to do,
Love standing by us softens every blow,
And where death enters, be it there or here,
Prepares a welcome and attends the bier.

EPILOGUE

NOTE:—About the year 1880 the writer accepted an invitation from the Division of the Grand Army of the Republic at St. Albans, Vermont, to deliver the Memorial Day address. He took for his subject "The Citizen Soldier." At the close of the address he drew a word picture of a peace-loving, contented, happy and prosperous people, and their sudden precipitation into a bloody war by a faction of discontented persons. The address was destroyed in the manner mentioned in the prefatory note, but from memory he is able to recall that it was closed with the following.

The picture, its army, its dead, its brave;
Worn out in service, wasted to the grave;
Life's burden borne, opportunity met,
Though passed from life live in remembrance
yet;

Their memory cherished, their example
Reviewed in detail shows the measure full;
Cut off by hatred in the prime of youth,
Rushed on to glory, martyrs to the truth;
Thence gone on before, yet the portal stands
Swung open widely and each spirit hand
Points to the banner waving o'er the land,
And each voice is shouting, "Hail to the end,
Flag of liberty, ensign of the free."
God's justice rules, then thrice happy is he
To whom it is permitted, at the wall,
Fighting for the right, wounded, there to fall.

THE MISSOURI RIVER

AGNOMEN

THE BIG MUDDY

Majestic River! Stream of ill repute—
Hence borne for mystic ages! Thy evil fame
Is self created, fix'd beyond refute,
And world-wide known, adhering to thy name:
Thy source is the wild Trident of the hills,
And mountain's heights—o'erspread
with melting snow—

Legions of brooklets—scores of rippling rills,
Together meeting in thy bed below.

Majestic Rivers! formed by Nature's hand—
Nor art, nor skill nor line, or chosen way,
Was ever shown thee through the arid land
Whence flow thy waters, as they ever may:—
Thus nature and thy own insensate self
Lead all thy waters to the waiting gulf.

Thy course is guided by thy bed and banks—
Thy bed and banks and waters are thy all,
And none are stable—so are nature's pranks:
Thy banks fall in—thy waters rise and fall—
Thy bed is shifty—chiefly silt and sand;
Unstable stuff! Right here in place today,

Tomorrow thy last channel may be land,
And then next morrow may have mov'd away.
Thy currents are not swift, or over strong:
The sailor man may stem them without fear,
And so does often, whether short or long,
And up or down his loaded boat may steer.
Majestic River! what delight to know!
Thy end in fact is not alone mere show.

The seasons are oft changing, warm and cold:
Summer and winter, autumn, springtime—
with care

Each comes and goes—winter both harsh
and bold—

Springtime with all surviving things that are
Most welcome—with its bounteous largess—
Summer, with its harvest time and harvest:
And autumn's fading picture—so all pass
In due time—none seems altogether best
For thee, O River! in winter ice-bound,
In summer shrivel'd by exceeding heat:
Thy spring's uprise and overflow are found
Quite harmless, nor fear'd in their mild
retreat—

Thy moods O, River! a delightful study!
Fittingly thy name is—The Big Muddy.

Majestic River! Mightiest of streams,
Whoso attended or alone may stand
Upon thy firm high banks, and musing—
 dreams,
And thinks he sees the world at its last end,
Is witness only of the springtime plight,
That nature meets out to old winter's frost,
And spring takes over in its rapid flight:
Though through such process naught
 of nature's lost—
Thy rushing waters drifting far and near,
And floating ice-cubes—roods of them therein,
Whirlpools and eddies—drift and dirt appear,
Confusion confounded, often, now and then:
In all thy swift and erratic changes,
'Tis thy debacle and so its name is.

EPIGRAM

By preterition, rhetoricians show,
Each claimed omission, be it true or no.

SPRINGTIME

(An Allegory)

Whereas Old Sol has crossed the line
And Winter's on its holiday—
Sir March's demis'd from short decline,
And springtime's here upon its way—
Aprille coquetting, many ways,
With snow and frost and change galore—
A maid of moods—or nights or days—
As was her custom years before—
Sunshine and warmth at her recall,
The earth o'erspreads with mantle green—
The forests and the brambles all
Abound in leaves and buds are seen :—
What time she tarries, not so long—
Decades, just three, no more, of days;
When sister May, much like a song,
Comes to the 'fore in her own ways.

Now May has come—a maiden too—
With mien more steady, not less gay—
Aprille's relieved—she now is through—
And here the spring o'ertakes sweet May.
So mark the change—or here or there—
No trifling intercourse, we know,
With snow or frost or chilling air,
Though on occasion all bestow,

Uncalled, their presence at the meet:
Fair maiden May with grace and charm,
And ways most gentle and elite—
In naught suggests the least of harm—
But coaxes and with zonal breeze
Brings out the buds and blossoms gay,
And o'er all nature—plants and trees—
Her favors spread in rich display.

Aprille and May—just two full months—
One freakish, but the other staid—
Each the other boldly confronts,
As neither's of the other 'fraid.
Thus far 'tis clear, we've had as guests,
Sisters of Spring—rough days and fair—
It may not prove, but it suggests,
That storm-days come and bright days are—
Martha and Mary—sisters twain,
A simile much talked about,
And so to make the story plain,
And fully test its credit out,
Sisters they were in very fact,
Saints Luke and John are so agreed,
A goodly tale, oft told, exact—
That's all we note—'tis true indeed.

Now of the graces there's a line,
Through May to June, whence all do go—
Their favors are most gay, sublime,
For May, sweet maid, has made them so—

Her handiwork is neat and trim—
Attention shapes all in design—
Her touch awakens life within
Each bud contain'd—Oh touch divine!
No favor shown—or there or here—
Her sweet compassion reaches all—
Her love goes forth, or far or near—
No living germ may miss its call:
Her breezes chant their matin song—
The birds and insects it assume,
And all together move along
Into the sister month of June.

'Twas Coleridge, wrote the fairest line,
In prose or verse 'tween pole and pole,
Thus: "In the leafy month of June."
And deeply touched each living soul,
Each soul that loves a happy thought,
Or grateful word or cheery line—
As all should love, yea, truly ought—
But those were days of Auld Lang Syne:—
Sweet June's allotment of the spring
Is just above a score of days—
Whence there she goes philandering
Into the shade of summer's bays—
A fickle maiden there she stands,
With smiles once parted 'twixt two friends—
The last now holds her willing hands,
And hence this tale here quickly ends.

*THE ABORIGINES' CONCEPT OF
THE DEITY*

SONNET

How rich the theme—its magnitude and might
O'erwhelm the judgment and outrun
the mind :—

The untaught savage through long years of
night,

Sought for some spirit that he could not find :
At last to end the so long reaching quest,
Divin'd a spirit of the dual kind :

In anger, rampant, but in grace at rest,
And thus it shows a nature ill or kind :—
The elements if normal note its smiles—
The raging floods, and waters, hail and sleet—
Clouds rushing o'er the sky and winter's gales,
The lightning's flash, the thunder's rumbling
feet—

Are spirits ill and illy satiate—
Naught but atonement can propitiate.

UNREST, A FRAGMENT

A rending shaft, thy furtive glance,
A pang, a flutter at my breast,
My Dove is flown; remains, perchance,
The hungry Raven of unrest.

"CARRY ON"

In divers prints we read each day,
The world-war was a horror:
The Teutons sought by war's essay,
And hate dispensing terror,
To awe their foes, allied and bold,
In union, French liaison:
The rush was met in manifold,
And the war went swiftly on.

No word is found, no English word,
Or French, so far as we know,
Nor plain command in near accord
That in fair meaning may show
The thought that moved the Briton right,
When he essay'd contention,
But Tommy knew he was to fight
By the order, "Carry on."

So "Carry on" became a phrase
Of war-time force and favor,
And moved the Britons to engage
The foe with might and furore,
But not in hate, or dread or fear,
So brave men fight and battle,
But "Carry on," or there or here,
And thus their issues settle.

The world is as a stricken field,
Great projects gauge its battles,
Which some do win, while others yield;
Live issues, nothing settles,
Who looks ahead and wisely far,
And pursues the safer run,
Attains success, his aim, his star,
And thereby the day is won.

Life's chiefest urge is "Carry on,"
But names no fix'd direction,
Its course an age long Marathon,
That ends in slight elation:—
The way is steep—severe indeed—
Part old—some new—much hidden—
All must attempt, while few succeed,
For so the Fates have bidden.

So "Carry on" is the command,
Nor hesitate, nor falter;
The puzzling query still does stand,
To-wit: Why is a piker?
Efficiency acclaims the meet—
Attention notes its measure,
While "Service" keeps the score complete—
Achievement counts the treasure.

NOBLESSE OBLIGE

(*Rank Imposes Obligation*)

In olden times, when men were not
So very wise and Christian,
As now they are, or claim to be,
Whatever their condition,
The heir apparent to the throne,
Or any priv'leged station,
By these two words was taught to know
His duty to the nation:—
Noblesse oblige.

Such time was when to common men,
How worthy their pretension,
No honors came, except it were
By royal condescension,
So the “elect” might well expect,
Should they be any wanting,
The less refined of every kind
Would look on them as vaunting:—
Noblesse oblige.

Hence, then, this truth, for high born youth,
Some special potense carried,
To some extent, at least, it meant
Decrease of station parried;
But now at last, from natal caste,
Is man emancipated,
And honors are for any “star,”
No matter how related:—
Noblesse oblige.

It is no flighty, light romance,
Nor moral pointed fable,
A grandest constable of France,
A baron high and noble,
Did this device choose as his own,
His 'scutcheon to emblazon,
From which with us, by being known,
His greatest fame has risen :—
Noblesse oblige.

This feudal chief thus emphasized
A most important lesson,
Imposed by ethics or devised
To make a clear impression,
And his design—the same is mine—
Was through the world's extension.
To man's vast duties here in life
To call each one's attention :—
Noblesse oblige.

Of none, indeed, can it be said,
He owes nor debt nor burden,
No living soul can claim, in truth,
No duty as a guerdon;
For whate'er place in life to fill,
Are set or thoughts or powers,
This maxim should all minds possess,
This motto brief be ours :—
Noblesse oblige.

'Tis all the same, whatever place
 Or station may be sought for;
The same response, the same refrain,
 Who loiters or may labor;
The novice young and eager quite,
 For any fray or venture,
Eftsoons apprenticed is to life,
 Finds it in his indenture:—
 Noblesse oblige.

The man who guides the plow afield,
 The servant at the larder,
The money kings upon the search
 For trade and gold and barter;
The statesman, he does find it true,
 Each soldier of the nation,
The lawyer and the doctor too,
 And each of ev'ry station:—
 Noblesse oblige.

The ruler of a people great;
 The follower of fashion;
Within the town or out of it,
 Each life has its relation.
Like pebble cast into the sea,
 That moves some slight inflation,
Increasing on and reaching forth,
 To all in some relation:—
 Noblesse oblige.

Does he escape of pulpit fame?
Does any on the ocean?
The workman at his toil and sweat,
Whatever his devotion?
The mother with her infant dear?
As certain too the father?
The schoolboy and the master stern?
The sister and the brother?
Noblesse oblige.

The field is broad, the way direct,
Or circling round some center;
Who starts, with wisdom must select
His way, to shun disaster.
But even then, with watchful care,
The sought for end may 'scape him,
For pitfalls are both here and there,
In hiding to o'ercome him:—
Noblesse oblige.

Then never cease in hope to toil,
E'en strive without cessation,
For life on all in ev'ry age
Imposes obligation.
And He who gives the work to do,
Creator of creation,
No service leaves without reward,
So work in expectation:—
Noblesse oblige.



Part Two



INTRODUCTION

To the Reader: The youngest of my parents' family was a son. In the year 1897 he was a teacher in some institution of learning at Andover, Mass. Early in the spring of that year he and his wife invited all of his brothers and sisters (the family consisted of ten children—three sisters and seven brothers) to visit them in the following August and thus hold a reunion. We had not been all together probably in near forty years—indeed never but once—the elder children having gone out for themselves before the youngest was born. So our good mother never saw her entire brood together as a unit except once, when those who were away returned for a short visit. I distinctly recall that on the occasion in question, she assembled us all in the living room of the old New England home and had us stand up in a row—side by side—in the order of our ages, beginning with the eldest, a sister. My place was number three in the line.

The invitations noticed suggested that each brother and sister prepare some kind of writing expressive of sentiments suitable to the occasion, to be read at the meeting. I had written some verse before then, so a poem was suggested as my contribution.

The eldest sister and the eldest of the family was then living at Salem, Oregon. She was quite aged and rather feeble. I was living at Bismarck, Dakota Territory, so naturally I was expected to arrange for her attendance at the meeting and would so have done, but for the fact that near the first of May she was stricken with apoplexy and she died on the 9th I believe. She had spent her mature years in the South—even the years of the war between the states—in Alabama, Florida and Texas. She was widowed at this time, having lost her husband in the latter state. I had visited her two or three times at Salem and was, I believe, the last of either of her brothers or sisters so to do. Indeed, I do not think that any of them, excepting myself, had at any time visited her after her removal to Oregon. Her death was the first to occur, of the group of children, and placed me, in view of the circumstances, in such a sad and peculiar predicament that I did not feel able to face it, and so did not attend the reunion, but prepared the verse that follows and had about thirty copies printed and bound in book form, and deckle-edged. The greater size was from left to right and its lesser from top to bottom. One stanza only was printed on a page. The form was the same as this with the foregoing exceptions. It is reproduced here as near as may be and thus

shown, except the binding and the writer's portrait, which therein appeared at the end of the volume. The verse other than "The Old Gate" has since been added. It is new.

It should properly enough be shown that the eldest sister during much of her life had been engaged in teaching—especially of music. The eldest brother also in teaching, largely of music, and later a merchant in Alabama. Myself a lawyer in Vermont and in Dakota Territory and North Dakota. The next brother younger, a minister of the Episcopal Church in Missouri. The next sister, a teacher in Ohio until her marriage in that state. The next, a brother, a physician in Vermont. The next, a sister and a teacher until her marriage in Vermont. The next, a brother and a physician in New York State. The next, a brother and a clerk in the employ of the Central Vermont Railway in Vermont, and the next and the youngest in the family, a teacher and now a college professor at New Brunswick, New Jersey.



THE OLD GATE

A RETROSPECT
IN RHYME

BY

GEO. W. NEWTON

"An old house is like an old violin, the music
of the past is wrought into it."

—VERMONT CHRONICLE, Dec. 3rd, 1880.

BISMARCK:
1897



DEDICATION

To my Brothers and Sisters, this Poem entitled "The Old Gate," is affectionately inscribed in memory of those early years when, while together pursuing the arduous labors that fell to our lot in youth, we were encouraged hopefully to look forward to more congenial fields of usefulness by her, the summation of whose full character can only be expressed by the beautiful words, CHRISTIAN MOTHER.



THE OLD GATE

I

PART the veiling clouds that hover
O'er remembrance of the past,
And life's retrospect discover
On the disc of memory cast,
 All in mezzotint repeated
 In one panoramic view—
Things accomplished or defeated,
To the mind's eye, full and true.

II

Each short step o'erlaps, returning,
Many years of time gone by,
In the acted scenes recurring
From the haunts of memory—
 Scenes that fill the ample measure
 Of the burdens borne or left—
 Hopes of usefulness or pleasure,
 Of fulfillment still bereft.

III

From the fields where we have striven
In the sterner walks of life,
Earnest as a sailor driven
To his cutlass in the strife,

Turned now back with frosted forehead
To the well remembered fane,
Where, in childhood, once we tarried,
Peering out upon life's plain.

IV

Mem'ry draws the lines less sharply
Than the living acts displayed—
Tints for colors—thus 'tis haply
Acute angles pale and fade.

Beautified by life's cosmetic,
Shade by time thrown o'er the scene,
Harshest sights grow e'en pathetic
In the dimness of their gleam.

~ V

From the somber heights of manhood,
Turning thence to its bright morn,
To the dear old home of childhood,
To the house where we were born,

There, the gate through which we enter
Is to live old days anew—
Thoughts upon their scenes concentrer,
And again they pass in view.

VI

Back upon its hinges turning,
When again the latch is raised,
We, their voices well discerning,
Stop and listen—grow amazed.

Listen and—what strange condition!
Voices rendered harsh by time
Speak a welcome recognition,
In the hinges' grating chime.

VII

Portal, to what mansions airy,
Dear old gate before the manse!
Portal, where all feet must tarry
Ere they measure life's expanse!

Portal, through which who has wandered
Ne'er again may find thee more!
Portal, at which time we pondered
Was but waiting on the shore!

VIII

Swiftly as the senses muster
From the world's loud battle din,
Round thee, in great numbers cluster
Relics of what things have been,

Till our hearts seem full to bursting,
And our eyes suffuse with tears,
Quite unbidden, from their thirsting
Fountains, dried up in the years.

IX

See we there ourselves, in wonder,
Peering through the fastened gate,
That, (as prison walls may sunder
Erring man from wrathful hate,)

Shields us—out upon the roadway,
Leading forth on either hand,
Dimly dreaming thence life someway,
Open must, in future, stand.

X

Later to its bars fast clinging,
Pleasure's moment all supreme,
In the giddy joy of swinging
Past and Future there between—

Heart in quickened pulses forming
Life's young blood for any fate—
Brain o'er full of visions swarming,
Back and forth as turned the gate.

XI

Oh! how often in the gloaming,
Or the fulness of the night,
O'er fatigued long years in roaming,
Thou hast stood before our sight!

And ambition's great emprises
Seemed to pale, or fade entire,
To the least that life comprises
As portrayed to Youth's desire.

XII

With thee oft we watched the morning
Brighten into perfect day,
Or the shadows fall in forming,
Far behind us in the way;

And the future seemed a golden
Romance, to our novice-mind,
Without cloud or fault beholden
That to trouble we should find.

XIII

And into our hearts swift entered
Such bright glow and depth of cheer
That when night in shadows gathered,
Fear of evil came not near,

For 'tis youth's undoubted treasure,
To discard all thoughts of ills
From the full-to-bursting measure
That the passing moment fills.

XIV

Live again the hopes just hinted
Unto us when there elate,
Waiting, thought run on unstinted,
Past the time for youth to wait—
Past the confines of the homestead
To imagined fields of strife—
Issues great to be contested
In the after-work of life—

XV

Castles for rude hands to sunder,
Theirs were walls of brittle glass—
That each stay too soon, from under,
In life's flood, for aye, should pass,
 Clearly in all parts out-standing
 Bold against the future's sky,
 Pictured in the sure expanding
 Of the waiting by-and-by.

XVI

Entrance narrow, in refusal,
'Gainst each worldly evil's call,
Than watch-guarded casement mural,
By the love impaling all—
 Way as broad, to him, as ocean,
 In whose heart pure virtue lives,
 Kept by self-imposed devotion
 That parental fondness gives.

XVII

Faithful ever to the mission
Thou wert placed there to fulfill,
Whoso through thee sought admission
Found thee living sponsor still,
 For thy voice's ready warning
 Quickly sounded the alarm,
 As a sentry true informing
 At the first approach of harm.

XVIII

Through thee from without came strangers,
Suing in affection's name;
Armed and girded for life's dangers,
Errant-knights of Cupid came—

And the names thereafter spoken
Softly, as in tender care,
Tell of heart-ties severed, broken
In the homestead's circle there.

XIX

Doorway at whose threshold severed
Are the dearest ties of earth,
Home-love to which what's endeavored
Afterwards, is nothing worth!

In thy presence was the parting
Spoken at that far-off day,
As for self, from home outstarting,
Youthful footsteps turned away.

XX

Through the shrouding mist and shadow
Of all things whate'er we've known,
Seen with brightness of a halo,
Is one form—*her* form—alone—

And we hear her last words clearest,
As we sadly turned away,
“Seek the One that's ever nearest,
Never, child, forget to pray.”

XXI

Ever present, true or seeming,
Guarding Gen'i of the way,
To the waking sense or dreaming,
Wander wheresoe'er we may,
Are those words thus fitly spoken—
Ripest fruitage of its kind!
Words of love that well betoken
Golden pictures of the mind.

XXII

And those words shall live forever,
And her look as they were said,
From remembrance naught can sever,
Till we're numbered with the dead—
At the gate there still she's standing,
And those spoken words as clear—
Tone and look and all commanding—
As that morning, now we hear.

XXIII

Witness thou the sad removal
Of her cold and shrouded form—
Mother Dear, in whose reproof
Glowed the love that's ever warm,
Followed thence in long procession,
Silent in a funeral train,
Summoned to the high fruition
That the righteous should attain.

XXIV

To thy urn in dust returning,
Ashes of the things we willed,
Wrought into their dross in fining,
Such the hopes our fancy filled—
 Burnt as with a fitful fever,
Near, this pyre which life we call,
Waiting Death's relentless cleaver,
Certain soon to come to all.

XXV

Waiting on in expectation,
The good hopes that fail us here,
Garnered there to delectation,
To His servants will appear—
 Waiting with expectant pleasure,
Patiently when, soon or late,
Having borne time's strickled measure
We shall meet her at THE GATE.

*Lines written in memory of my eldest sister,
Mrs. C. A. Stoudenmeyer deceased May,
1897, at Salem, Oregon, and there buried.*

Thy new form'd grave was there and dark
and cold,
When thence my footsteps sadly I did guide,
Thy last long home to visit and behold,
And deep in meditation stand beside—
Cheerless and dumb, while visions sad and
strange,
Too soon to shadows pal'd by time thence
flown,
In lapse of the long years that spann'd the
range
'Twixt youth's young days and days since
aged grown—
Thy presence there within the lowly tomb,
And absence from the active life around,
Awoke, in thought, sad pictures of the gloom
In which the time we live may soon abound:
And there with free and funereal tears,
Bright, clear and livid scenes and their events
Of early days and times of youth's fond years,
In memory slumb'ring, awoke and thence
Before me stood the old familiar home—
Where all once gathered—nor was one there
not.

The dearest mother there, but not alone—
Her many children—such a gleeful lot—
Were there, free, gay, happy and welcome, all,
And of which thou were indeed the eldest
And the leader truly, and so thoughtful—
Commanding by mild words of mere request.
Thy censure, gentle in reproof, with urge
Of love and friendship, and thy apt commend
A boon—e'en wine and manna, dry and large;
Did discord seem, or ever strife impend,
Thy word alone, if heard, would soon amend;
Thy slender form and figure, to the fill,
Thine own were truly—thine unto the end;
Nor word nor movement—imitation ill—
Both thoughts and poise were thine, and thine
alone.

The evenings' study and the busy days,
School time and play time and the teacher
friend,
The minister, a caller, and his ways,
Kind neighbors and the doctor understand—
Playmates and schoolmates and the higher
class—
The music, recitations and essays,
Were there assembl'd and each and all en masse
In memory living and in thought's displays—
As all had been long years before and were—

Though some 'twas known, as dearest mother,
had

The great divide pass'd o'er and were not
there,

And thus I stood reflectively and sad—
But mem'ry clings not to dark views alone,
But speedy seizes some awakened ray,
And to its source pursues it, to atone
For each omission and so long delay:
So thus my vision chang'd, to fair and bright,
And other scenes recall'd, full form'd and
clear,

At the old home and then there came in sight
Things long o'erlooked, but welcome and so
dear.

Much frolicking and rollicking and glee
Abounding, and youthful trick and playing—
And sport and joy—quipping and repartee—
Each and all in clear remembrance staying—
The ready word and joke and apt reply—
Again from youth and childhood, so long gone,
With quicken'd footstesp in my thoughts
went by

In multitudes, much like a living throng.
What time so standing foils me now to state,
All visions forming need not here be told,
But days appear'd both sad and desolate,
Some sixty years gone by, truly to hold—

When on occasion thou didst frank allege,
A guest from the fair Southland to appear—
To whom, dear Sister, thou by solemn pledge
And plight, thy heart had given, free and clear.
What speedy preparations then were sought
Need not be said, but soon a gentleman
Was duly welcom'd, truly as he ought.

Anon the minister came thence, and when
The nuptial vows of pledge and faith were said
The smiles and tears and greetings were not
few,

Till time demanded all should move ahead.
So bidding bride and groom a swift adieu,
Their lives together some way to arrange,
Fond wife and husband left New England's
hills

For the fair Southland home, both new and
strange,

And hence now ends the scenes my vision fills.
The groom, with love and joy and worthy
pride,

Departed with his happy new-made bride.
Still the old home remains 'gainst time and
tide,
But none is there with whom my thoughts
abide.

SUMMATION

I

The infant years are steps to mount
From zero-days to days sublime:
Their small events seem of account,
In the forthcoming reach of time.
The days, the weeks, the months and all,
Seem but to pass too slowly on—
Accumulate—perchance appal—
For youth to meet and muse upon.
Life's later years bring not relief,
But hasten, hurry, disappear—
Ne'er to return. Alas, the grief
That age must meet—it may be fear.
Most favor'd time while lives depend,
Is *all* between their start and end.

II

This stanza hints of means and ways,
'Twixt youth's release and age—decline,
Of duty's call, rewards and lays,
Occasions, efforts, and in fine,
What things are met throughout each day,
The trail we pass along or o'er—
Long hours of labor, some of play,
Of service some, of duty more—

(For duty heeds no stops at all),
To self, our fellows and the state,
Continuous—whate'er befall—
Service to God both soon and late—
Nor yet forgetting the first call
Is wife and children, one and all.

III

Kind friends forbear—do not complain,
Time rushes ever on, nor ceases—
Each day that passes ne'er again
Shall see its hours or e'en their pieces.
Men live, exist, and come and go—
Grow old and wise, we may believe.
Succeed or fail, a time or so—
The end to come none can conceive:—
'Tis quite in vain we moralize,
Or seek to know, or reason why
Our aim we miss and lose the prize,
And bid our fondest hopes goodbye.
We're growing old, sedate and sober—
E'en while so writing we've grown older.

IV

So now at last we close this book
With wishes kind to all who read it—
Just catch it up and through it look—
Some faults you'll find or maybe merit;
Its thoughts are chaste, its diction clear,
There's naught herein that'd lewd or vulgar.

It may exact a lonely tear—
Perhaps invite to welcome slumber.
The time it cost has well been spent,
Its preparation a great pleasure,
So there is nothing to repent,
Since it has fill'd time's vacant measure.
Dear reader kind, who would deny—
We part in friendship? Shake—Goodbye.

THE END







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